or by a Sir Christopher Wren. He considers all these as growing under the superintending eye and inspiration of personified divinity—be it Minerva or Pallas;—their beauty and contrivance, and the transcendancy of their invention being referred to a superior Power, who strengthened the artists' energies. Moreover, he reminds us how the workmanship added immeasurably to the value of the material, by the superiority of mind over matter. In objects of fictile manufacture, where the finer and more delicate skill of the hands was visible, the splendid vase is praised, not because its material is costly, but because it is "figur'd with art that dignified the gold," and reflected "the image of a master-mind." We witness, in all this, a most consummate taste and judgment. So Ovid, in the opening of his glowing description of Phæton:—

"Regia Solis erat sublimibus alta columnis.
Clara micante auro, flammasque imitante pyropo;
Cujus ebur culmen, fastigia summa tegebat:
Argenti bifores radiabant lumine valvæ.
Materiem superabat opus."

The bard of the "Iliad" says, the inventor of these elegant arts was a wise man, and that he must have acted from precepts delivered to him by Minerva. Thus:—

"The work
'Twas a wise artist fram'd, his wisdom taught
By precepts from Minerva."

F. LUAH.

THE FOUR-O'CLOCK MOVEMENT.

SIR,—Observing in your valuable publication of the 28th of October a letter from Mr. Wm. Jenkins, Secretary to "The Masons of London Protection Society;" and knowing your willingness on all occasions to give publicity to any matter likely to be productive of real good to the employers and employed connected with the building business, I am induced to take the liberty of addressing a few remarks in reference to the four-o'clock movement.

I am but a young man, though during my short career have had much experience among workmen, having been engaged in works of considerable importance, and am fully convinced that "the four-o'clock movement" works badly, both for masters and men. I have generally in my employ from thirty to forty hands, and up to the present time have not been applied to by my men to adopt the four-o'clock system, which I can, in some measure, account for from their knowing my feeling in the matter, and moreover I am satisfied that affairs of this kind depend principally on the foreman of the establishment.

When the obnoxious system was first mooted, a meeting of the members of "the Builders' Society" was called together at the Freemasons' Tavern, Great Queen-street, when the gentlemen who first countenanced its adoption were present, one of whom, by the by, has, I believe, ceased to become a competing builder, and builds now only for himself. That gentleman (if I am correctly informed) stated at that meeting that he should put the deficiency caused by the mechanics striking work at four o'clock on Saturdays on the purchase of his several houses. So far so good; but pray may I ask in what way can the less favoured tradesmen of the metropolis make up for so gross an imposition on the part of the mechanic?

Is it possible, in times like the present, that a master who adopts this measure can be put fairly into competition with another who has (that which in all conscience he is justly entitled to) the full benefit of his men's labour on the Saturday as on other days? For instance, every mechanic employed in establishments where the plan, or rather privilege, is granted, receives 9d., and every labourer about 6d. over and above that for which they work—consequently a master employing one or two hundred hands, and being compelled to accede to its adoption, would fall very far short of the balance he ought to be able to shew at the end of the year. If quitting work at four o'clock on the Saturday really was, in the least, beneficial to the workman, or at all consistent with common sense or justice, I should be one of the first to promote its general adoption, but one glance at the public-houses in the immediate neighbourhood of the pay-table of builders who allow it, will soon convince an observer to the contrary.

I therefore do hope those gentlemen builders who first gave way to the demand, now they can plainly see the bad working of such a measure, will reconsider the matter, and not allow the little builders of the metropolis to be crushed by such oppression, notwithstanding they themselves are by good fortune placed beyond its lash.

A YOUNG BUILDER.

PROTECTION OF PILES IN SEA-WATER, AND OF TIMBER FROM ANTS.

SIR,—In your last monthly part I perceive two letters, headed "Protection of Piles in Sea-water," and both recommendatory of iron clout nails; the last of the two, signed "W. B.," adding that timber prepared with Payne's process had effectually withstood the *teredo navalis* and the white ant of India. It would be difficult to give proof of this.

Iron clout or broad-headed nails lose their heads when rusted; and I have seen timber which had been covered with such, but which, when taken up, was quite destroyed. Copper nails are preferable, but more expensive. Some foreigners use sheet lead nailed on to piles, and wrapped close round with tarred rope, well tarred. For wharfing I have known sheet-iron fastened with zinc-headed nails resist the action of the sea-water (by tide) for ten years; whilst iron, fastened with iron, lasted only in the same situation two or three years. But my main object in addressing you is to refer to Payne's process as considered proof against the white ants.

In September, 1847, Mr. John Bourne, formerly of the East-Indian Railway, took out with him to Calcutta specimens of wood prepared according to Burnett's, to Margery's, to Bethell's, and Payne's two processes. The specimens consisted of larch, fir, birch, beech, ash, and teak, and he intended to have submitted them to the test of the white ant himself. Circumstances, however, induced him to return to England in February last, and before leaving he placed them at my disposal. I immediately went to the Howrah Dock, and deposited them in various places. Some specimens I put in the damp, and others in the dry, but all in ants'-nests. I also had others nailed on to the dock wharf to ascertain the action of the worm.

In July last (therefore only about an interval of five months) I revisited the spot, and examined the specimens. Those placed in damp situations were all more or less destroyed, some nearly eaten up, and but two sufficiently remaining to be recognised. No solution appeared to offer any superior advantage. Those placed in the dry, on the contrary, were untouched, while pieces of unprepared wood placed with them had been destroyed.

The pieces nailed on to the wharf were also undestroyed. The time, however, had been too short to enable any decided opinion to be formed; and as I was obliged to quit India in July, I left the experiments to be continued by Mr. Bremner, of the Docks. The subject is one deserving the attention of the East-India Company; and there are many experiments connected both with this subject and others which might be undertaken at but little cost, and which would prove very valuable in the event of any works (such as railway bridges, &c.) being executed. I have not troubled you with any details—but such have been properly kept. GEO. B. W. JACKSON.

Maida Hill, Nov. 6, 1848.

P.S. It should also be borne in mind that the white ants of Calcutta are nothing in size to those of the upper provinces.

A FATAL EXPLOSION has just occurred in a pit near Whitehaven, leased by the Hæmatite Mining Company, in consequence of the folly and rashness of one or other of the workmen, who had taken off the top of his safety-lamp to light his pipe, and thus sacrificed not only his own life but the lives of other twenty-nine, men and children, being the whole number employed in the mine, with one exception. Why not lock the lamps, and have the keys in the hands of some one responsible party?

NOTES IN THE PROVINCES.

THERE is to be a competition, it is said, for plans for the new county lunatic asylum at Brentwood. A contemporary understands that eleven architects are already prepared to compete.——The Bedford prisons, as they progress, appear to be yielding a goodly crop of local criticism, at the expense of the architect; but we gather very little of the real substantial merits of the question from the leafy luxuriance of trees of knowledge which yield far more flowers of rhetoric than solid tangible fruits, whether ripe or unripe, sour or mellow.——H. R. H. Prince Albert has signified his intention of laying the first stone of the new Philanthropic Farm School about to be established near Barnet. ——A new church of stone, from designs by Messrs. Hamilton and Saunders, of Wolverhampton, architects, is shortly to be founded at Oker-hill, Tipton.——One of the Liverpool council has "very satisfactorily shewn that, deducting 400*l.* which the late Harrington Company had charged the Paul-street bath in that town for the supply of water, that institution was self-supporting. Twenty thousand persons had bathed there gratuitously last year; and he expressed a hope that salt-water baths for a shilling each would be given to the public at the George's Pier. The baths at that place had cost 30,560*l.*, and they were now only paying an annual rent of 210*l.*, something like one-half per cent., whereas, by a different system of management, they might be made self-supporting."—Christ Church, Great Homer-street, Liverpool, was consecrated on Monday week.——The nave of Hereford Cathedral, according to the local *Times*, will shortly be reitted for the resumption of daily prayers.——The same authority states that the ancient structure at Hereford, known as the White Cross, built by Bishop Charlton, in the early part of the fifteenth century, has been carefully repaired during the past week, at least as far as regards the flight of seven steps upon which the stalk of the cross is elevated. These steps were very much worn in many places, and threatened to give way, and destroy the whole of this interesting relic of antiquity. The expense of repair has been defrayed by the Rev. Canon Lord Saye and Sele.——At a recent vestry meeting at Leominster attention was drawn to the state of the great west window of the church, which the surveyor had reported to be in a very dangerous state, and at least requiring repair estimated at 320*l.*, if not complete renewal. Plans for a new window had been made by order of a previous committee, and tenders advertised for; but the vestry determined on further inquiries before coming to any final decision on the subject.

WESTMINSTER DISTRICT SURVEYORSHIP.

AN adjourned meeting of the Middlesex magistrates was held on the 20th ultimo, at Westminster, Mr. Pownall in the chair; for the purpose of electing a surveyor for the district of St. Margaret and St. John the Evangelist, Westminster, under the Metropolitan Buildings Act. Originally there were four candidates for the appointment, viz., Mr. Jas. Howell, Mr. George L. Taylor, Mr. W. F. East, and Mr. F. H. Groves; but the three latter resigned in favour of Mr. Howell, who has for some time discharged the duties of the office as the deputy of the late Mr. Pilkington, who had held it for sixty-four years.

On the motion of Mr. France, seconded by Captain Bague, Mr. Howell was unanimously elected, and was doubtless gratified by the complimentary observations which the chairman addressed to him at the close of the business.

GUTTA PERCHA.—A correspondent at Singapore says:—"The price of gutta percha has greatly varied since my arrival here: at one time it was speculated on like opium: it was shortly after my arrival at 21 dollars to 22 dollars, it is now to be purchased from 9 dollars to 10 dollars per picul of 133⅓ pounds. They make wash-hand basins and water jugs of it here, also buckets, riding whips, &c.: it is an excellent material for ships' use, it not being breakable."

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